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NSC BRIEFING

20 February 1957

THE SHEPILOV-GROMYKO SHIFT

- I. Shepilov's transfer from Foreign Ministry post to his old job on the party secretariat is intended to strengthen party leadership according to the "private party line" in Moscow.
  - A. Soviet officials have said that Shepilov's transfer means no change in foreign policy.
- II. Shepilov's training and experience make him a "natural" to direct party's campaign against "ideological nonconformity."
- III. Gromyko, known as one of the Soviet Unions most skillful and stubborn diplomats may bring a change of emphasis in the conduct of Soviet diplomacy but it will apparently be carried out within established lines.
- IV. The Soviet press and radio have played down Gromyko's appointment and have concentrated on Shepilov's "exhaustive and comprehensive" foreign policy report to the Supreme Soviet.
- V. Moscow may anticipate that developments in the Middle East, on disarmament and the German question will lead to renewed negotiations with the West at the foreign minister level.
  - A. Ambassador Bohlen believes that the Soviet leaders' desire to have their most experienced diplomat represent them in such negotiations was a major factor in the decision to appoint Gromyko.  Gromyko will attend the UN Disarmament Subcommittee meeting in London next month.

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NSC BRIEFING

20 February 1957

### THE SHEPILOV-GROMYKO SHIFT

- I. Shepilov transferred from Foreign Ministry post to his old job on the party secretariat at party central committee meeting held on 13-14 February. The "private party line" in Moscow is that the shift is a device to strengthen party leadership.
  - A. A Soviet Foreign Ministry desk officer told Ambassador Bohlen the moves were made in order to improve the central party organization.
  - B. Deputy Foreign Minister Zorin has said that Shepilov's transfer meant no change in foreign policy and that his speech at the Supreme Soviet on 12 February remained the outline of major foreign policy.
  - C. Khrushchev voiced the same view at a reception for the visiting Bulgarian delegation on 18 February.
- II. Shepilov, who served as foreign minister only eight months, returns to a party post at a time when "ideological nonconformity" has become a major problem and when the Soviet leaders have ordered a basic reorganization of their governmental structure.
  - A. Shepilov's training and experience make him a "natural" to direct the party's campaign on the propaganda front, having served as head of the party's propaganda department and as editor of Pravda for a number of years.
- III. Shepilov's successor, Andrei Gromyko, is, of course, one of the Soviet Union's most experienced diplomats.
  - A. He is well known for his stubbornness and skill in diplomatic

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work and he still holds the record for casting vetoes in the UN.

- B. Gromyko may bring a change of emphasis or manner in the conduct of Soviet diplomacy but it will apparently be carried out within established foreign policy lines.
- C. His appointment lowers the prestige of the ministry, since he is a foreign policy technician rather than a policy maker. He ranks lower in the party than any foreign minister since Litvinov.

IV. The Soviet press and radio have played down Gromyko's appointment and have concentrated on Shepilov's "exhaustive and comprehensive" foreign policy report to the Supreme Soviet.

- A. This strong endorsement of Shepilov's speech, which reaffirmed the policy lines of the 20th Party Congress, provides additional evidence that the Soviet leaders do not intend to revert to the old cold war situation.
- B. Shepilov's stress on the theme that the "policy of peaceful coexistence" remains the "cornerstone of Soviet foreign policy" indicates that the Kremlin is still committed to a general policy of detente and relaxation of tensions. The Soviet leaders may believe that this line will enable them eventually to recover the prestige and initiative lost by the suppression of the Hungarian revolt.

V. Moscow may anticipate that developments in the Middle East, on disarmament and the German question will lead to renewed negotiations with the West at the foreign minister level.

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- A. Ambassador Bohlen believes that the Soviet leaders' desire to have their most experienced diplomat represent them in such negotiations was a major factor in the decision to appoint Gromyko.
- B. The Soviet Union recently proposed that the forthcoming meeting of the UN Disarmament Subcommittee be held at the foreign minister level. [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED] Gromyko will attend the London meeting next month.

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